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Letter dated 18 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I regret to inform you that, in flagrant violation of the ceasefire, and despite our numerous calls to the Council, troops of the Rwandan Patriotic Army (APR), assisted by elements of the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD)-Goma, besieged the town of Moliro, situated 400 km east of Lubumbashi (province of Katanga), on Saturday, 16 March 2002.

In order to carry out the threat it had made at the most recent meeting of the Political Committee of the Lusaka Agreement, Rwanda proceeded as follows:

1. On 9 March 2002, the ship *Mpala*, originating from Kalemie, brought troops and equipment to Moba;

2. From 10 to 11 March 2002, several nighttime circuits of a cargo aircraft bringing reinforcements of Rwandan troops and equipment to the airport at Kalemie were observed;

3. On 11 March 2002, two circuits of this same aircraft were observed. At 1730 hours local time, the Rwandan troops (a battalion) from Pepa attacked the positions of the Forces armées congolaises (FAC) about 9 km from the Bay of Lunangwa. The fighting, which lasted all night, did not end until the morning of 13 March 2002;

4. On Wednesday, 13 March 2002, at 1530 hours local time, Rwandan troops arriving from Mwange attacked the FAC positions 10 km south of Moliro. Fifteen minutes later, the Rwandan troops launched an attack in this district;

5. On Thursday, 14 March 2002, fighting took place 15 km from Moliro;

6. On Friday, 15 March 2002, the Rwandan troops continued their offensive 15 km from Moliro, and in the evening, another Rwandan detachment made a sortie 5 km from Moliro;

7. The Moliro attack was waged by Rwandan troops estimated at 10,000 men; they were subsequently joined by elements of RCD-Goma;

8. The routes chosen were as follows:

On 14 March 2002, 20 to 30 military trucks transporting elements of APR travelled from Kigali (Rwanda) to Bukavu (Democratic Republic of the Congo). They continued in the direction of Lake Tanganyika as far as Uvira,

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from where these troops embarked for Kalemie and Moba. Air circuits were also made between Kigali and Kalemie, and between Kigali and Kindu.

All this information was duly conveyed directly to the command of the forces of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), which confirmed the movement of the Rwandan troops, particularly in the Pepa area, but took no action.

My Government would like to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the Security Council to a major redeployment of APR in the province of eastern Kasai in the Mbuji-Mayi and Kabinda area, and in the provinces of Maniema and the two Kivus, particularly in the Walungu district, 40 km from Bukavu, where combing and reprisals operations are currently taking place against the Mai-Mai combatants.

These actions by Rwanda and RCD-Goma constitute a grave violation of the ceasefire and thereby call in question all the other activities envisaged within the framework of the Lusaka Agreement, because this constitutes the prerequisite for carrying out the other activities, including the inter-Congolese dialogue.

My Government therefore draws the attention of the Security Council to this latest resumption of hostilities by APR and RCD-Goma which is liable to jeopardize the inter-Congolese dialogue begun on 25 February at Sun City, in South Africa, and, hence, the entire peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government, which could not remain passive in the face of this latest provocation on the part of the Rwandan aggressors and their Congolese accomplices, has therefore decided to suspend its participation in the plenary meetings of the inter-Congolese dialogue until a viable solution is found to the belligerent behaviour of the Rwandan aggressor.

This solution necessarily requires an announcement by Rwanda of a unilateral ceasefire and the return of its troops to Kalemie, the town which, with Kongolo, Kabalo and Nyunzu, forms the new defensive positions (NPD) allocated to APR and RCD-Goma by the Harare sub-plans for disengagement and redeployment.

My Government would also like to inform the Security Council that it is firmly committed to the process of the inter-Congolese dialogue and hopes for its full success, since it is deeply convinced of the unique opportunity offered by the dialogue to enable the Congolese participating in this important forum, including the Government, all of whom share responsibility for the future of their nation, to respond to the expectations of the Congolese population in terms of peace, hope, prosperity, democracy and development.

My Government would like to stress, however, that, in view of the grave situation caused by Rwanda and RCD-Goma, which have taken it upon themselves to violate the Lusaka ceasefire agreement, it has a constitutional duty to safeguard the territorial integrity and national sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo; these principles have been reaffirmed many times by the Security Council. My Government also has a duty to defend the nation, as authorized by the Charter of the United Nations, above all Article 51.

The Council will recall that earlier, my Government had denounced the reinforcement of Rwandan troops from Bukavu consisting of several heavily armed battalions with the objective of taking Moliro and seizing the towns of Lubumbashi and Kamina in order to sabotage the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation,

resettlement and reintegration (DDRRR) operation, so as to remove all pretexts for Rwanda to continue its military intervention in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My Government believes that serious questions need to be asked about the launching of these military operations at a time when negotiations are under way and all the parties know full well that all the military disputes need to be resolved within the context of the Political Committee. This resumption of hostilities is a manifestation of the desire expressed many times by Rwanda to achieve the dismemberment of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for purposes of political domination and the control of important sources of raw materials.

My Government calls on the Security Council to meet urgently to:

1. Denounce Rwanda and RCD-Goma for the resumption of hostilities;

2. Demand that Rwanda and RCD-Goma should halt the hostilities immediately and unconditionally and withdraw their troops to their initial positions;

3. Call upon the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to deploy observers in the conflict zone in order to monitor the implementation of the ceasefire and the withdrawal of the forces that are in the zone;

4. Demand also from Rwanda and RCD-Goma the full, strict and comprehensive implementation of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement, the Kampala disengagement plan and the Harare sub-plans for disengagement and redeployment;

5. Further demand that Rwanda immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in accordance with Security Council resolution 1304 (2000) of 16 June 2000 and all the Council's later resolutions on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

6. Order the resumption of the activities of humanitarian workers and human rights defenders in order to assist the Congolese people in distress in the conflict zone.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ileka **Atoki**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative